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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NAIROBI 002719

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SUBJECT: SOMALIA - PRIME MINISTER REBUFFED BY SPEAKER IN
BAIDOA

Classified By: Somalia Unit Counselor Bob Patterson. Reasons: 1.4 (b, d).

11. (C) Summary: A dejected Transitional Federal Government (TFG) Prime Minister Hussein told us December 3 that his one-day trip to Mogadishu and Baidoa in a bid to win parliamentary confirmation of his transitional cabinet and the November 26 Djibouti unity government communique had been rebuffed by Parliament Speaker Madobe. Madobe had reportedly told the Prime Minister that the Parliament needed more time to study the communique, and that he himself was not happy with the agreement to expand the Parliament and consider a vote for a new leadership. The Prime Minister suspected that TFG President Yusuf had bribed Madobe in order to win his consent to obstruct Parliament's consideration of his cabinet and the communique. He also suspected that Yusuf had convinced Madobe that Alliance for the Reliberation of Somalia Deputy Sharif Hassan would take the Speaker's job from him should there be new elections. The Prime Minister's efforts to ensure a quorum almost failed when only a handful of MPs agreed to accompany him on his December 3 flight from Nairobi, and only a few more joined him during his one-hour stop in Mogadishu on his way to Baidoa. Meanwhile, a no-doubt relieved President Yusuf has traveled to Djibouti to meet with President Guelleh and, possibly, ARS Chairman Sheikh Sherif. End summary.

12. (C) A dejected TFG Prime Minister Nur Hassan Hussein "Nur Adde," fresh from a one-day round-trip flight to Mogadishu and Baidoa, ascribed his failure to win Parliament Speaker Madobe's agreement to back the Prime Minister's interim cabinet and the November 26 Djibouti unity government communique to the destructive influence of TFG President Abdullahi Yusuf. Yusuf, Hussein said, had lobbied the Speaker to end his earlier agreement to cooperate in winning Parliament's approval of the cabinet. The Prime Minister alleged that Yusuf had offered Madobe money, and that he had convinced the Speaker that ARS Deputy Chairman Sharif Hassan was anxious to push him out of his Speaker's chair in order to get the Speaker to re-think his cooperation with the Prime Minister.

13. (C) For his part, Madobe explained to the media in Baidoa that his sudden reluctance to cooperate with the Prime Minister was due to a lack of consultations on the cabinet, and to his unease with the size of the enlarged Parliament that had emerged from the November 26 Djibouti communique. The Prime Minister's December 3 one-on-one lunch with the Speaker had yielded "nothing," Hussein said.

14. (C) The Prime Minister said that many fewer MPs than expected had agreed to accompany him from Nairobi to Baidoa on his December 3 flight. The MP turnout in Mogadishu, where he stopped briefly en route had been similarly sparse. The PM ascribed the low turnout to Yusuf's lobbying which, he

implied, included bribery. He also acknowledged that deteriorating security in Baidoa and some MPs' anger at not having been paid their allowances for time spent in Nairobi since the October IGAD Summit may also have contributed. Still, he said, there was a quorum in Baidoa while he was there, and the chief obstacle was the Speaker's unwillingness to convene the Parliament.

15. (C) The Prime Minister urged that the international community "pressure" MPs still in Nairobi and elsewhere to return to Baidoa. He also asked that we "twist (Madobe's) arm, as well." (In a December 2 telephone call to Baidoa, Madobe previewed to us some of the same arguments he used on December 3 with the Prime Minister.)

16. (C) In a December 4 conversation, Yusuf's Deputy National Security Advisor, Hassan Abdulkadir Tahir, attempted to persuade Embassy that Yusuf supports a prospective TFG - ARS unity government, but believed that "some TFG members with links to Islamists" were working with "Ethiopian officials" to sabotage the process. Tahir offered an extended defense of Yusuf's decision to reject the transitional cabinet proposed by the Prime Minister. He argued that, unless the international community joined forces with Yusuf, Somalia would fall into the hands of radical Islamists. Yusuf, said Tahir, was in Djibouti at the invitation of President Guelleh who, he said, was attempting to arrange a meeting for the President with ARS Chairman Sheikh Sharif.

Comment

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17. (C) The Prime Minister, who seemed to radiate certainty in the days preceding and immediately following the November 24 - 26 Djibouti High-Level Committee negotiations, was very subdued following his unsuccessful trip to Baidoa. He admitted that he may have made a tactical error in pressing the Speaker to support immediate ratification of both his cabinet and the communique. It might have been better to postpone consideration of the communique, he agreed, as a number of its provisions required a two-thirds vote to amend the Transitional Federal Charter. Still, he traced his December 3 problems in Baidoa directly back to Yusuf who, he said, seemed determined to sabotage any effort to advance the Djibouti Process that does not leave him its unchallenged leader.
RANNEBERGER